

March 9, 2012

Judiciary Committee

Testimony of Nancy Piccirillo in support of

HB 5388: An Act Concerning Court Fees And The Delivery Of Legal Services To The Poor

My name is Nancy Piccirillo. I am 59 years old and I am on disability. Two years ago I was renting a room from someone and needed to leave. I faced the prospect of being homeless and the daunting task of trying to find the monies to move in an apartment on my SSI income. I didn't know which way to turn, and was fearful and scared. I was terrified of being homeless. I kept looking around and wondering what I would do. How would I live? Would I have to sleep in the street? I couldn't think about anything else and was worried all the time.

It was a church member who informed me of legal aid. I made an appointment. My attorney's name was Nilda. She explained that there was a program that could help me to get a little help with security and rent money to get me started. As soon as I met with Nilda I felt better. She gave me hope and made me feel better. I believed it might actually be OK.

She prepared an application for me, worked with the landlord and advocated for me before the committee which controlled the funds. They agreed to pay the security deposit and help with the first few months rent. I was able to move into a new apartment which is perfect for me. I can't tell you enough how much it helped me at that time in my life. I felt safe and secure. It meant the world to me know and still does.

Two years later I am still in the apartment and I love it. I hope to stay there forever. I am grateful every day for the help legal aid gave me. They gave me a foundation when I really needed it. It changed my life. It wasn't just getting into the apartment. It was having somewhere to turn where people heard my fears and helped. It was a new start when I needed it. It was safety and security at a very scary time. The psychological impact was so great. I am grateful every day and never lose sight of that.

I have nothing but praise to give legal services. They helped me immensely. I strongly believe others should get the same help when they need it. Please help legal aid with the funding they need to continue to help people like me.